

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A tongue depressor for receipt within a mouth of a patient during an examination, comprising:

a blade comprising first and second sides separated by a thickness of said blade, said blade further comprising first and second tongue contact portions located along said first and second sides, respectively; and

an ornamental image appearing along at least a portion of at least said first tongue contact portion of said first side;

wherein any portion of said tongue depressor blade may be received within said mouth of said patient during said examination, even if said any portion of said tongue depressor has said ornamental image appearing therealong.

2. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, said ornamental image appearing along both said first tongue contact portion and said second tongue contact portion of said blade.

3. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, further comprising another ornamental image appearing along at least a portion of at least said second tongue contact portion of said blade, wherein even a portion of said tongue depressor blade bearing said another ornamental image may be received into said mouth of said patient.

4. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 3, wherein said ornamental image and said another ornamental image are the same.

5. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 3, wherein said ornamental image and said another ornamental image are different.

6. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 3, wherein said ornamental image and said another ornamental image are made of ink approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for application to items to be received within a person's mouth.

7. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, further comprising a flavor coating along at least a portion of said blade.

8. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, wherein said tongue depressor is made of wood.

9. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, wherein said tongue depressor is made of plastic.

10. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, wherein said tongue depressor is made of cardboard.

5 11. A tongue depressor as recited in claim 1, wherein said tongue depressor is sterile.

12. An apparatus for motivating the cooperation of youthful patients in oral examinations, comprising a tongue depressor for restraining a tongue of a patient to allow clearer examination of a rear of a patient's mouth and throat, comprising a blade having
10 two elongated, substantially flat surfaces for restraining said tongue of said patient, at least one of said two surfaces bearing an ornamental image along at least a portion thereof intended to be inserted into said patient's mouth, said ornamental image being made from U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved ink.